THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) As per the data available from Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Kolkata, the value of merchandise exports, imports and trade balance for the first halfof2002-03.2001-02,2000-01 and 1999-2000 are given as under:

(Value in US $ Million)

Years (April-Sept.)	Exports	Imports	Trade Balance
1999-2000	17461.4	22474.3	-5012.88
2001-01	21385.7	25469	-4083.31
2001-02	21123.9	25982.5	^858.6
2002-03(P)	23974.3	28277.4	-4303.11

(P): Provisional Figures

(c) The trade gap in 2002-03 (April-September) has actually fallen as compared to the corresponding period in 2001 -02. The export growth rate of 13.5% in the first half of the year is above the target of 12%. Export promotion being a constant endeavour, various initiatives have been taken by the Government to boost exports of merchandise goods and to reduce the trade gap. The EXIM Policy for 2002-07 incorporates a number of measures to proactively promote exports. Some of the major initiatives undertaken by the Government to boost exports of merchandise goods include launching the scheme of Assistance to States for Infrastructure Development for Exports, strengthening of Market Access Initiative, establishing Agri-Export Zones, incorporating additional features and facilities for Special Economic Zones, launching of "Focus Africa" Programme, etc. Besides these, a Medium Term Export Strategy 2002-07 which was announced this year, has identified 220 Focus Products and 25 Focus Markets to achieve l%sharein world exports by 2006-07.

Development of hydrogen car

1205. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to slate:

(a) whether is a fact that India and USA are implementing projects for developing hydrogen car;

(b) if so, the details of the projects;

(c) the target fixed; and

(d) the extent of involvement of India in the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) to (d) Auto Industry is flilly delicensed and the Government have no direct role in its operations. As per the information received from the Society for Indian Automobile Manufacturers Association (SIAM), no joint project on this subject exists between the industries of the two countries at present.

Approval of Export Zone at Vijayawada

1206. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAHiWill the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Export (Agri) Zone at Vijayawada has been approved by Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether a Memorandum of Understanding between Government and Government of Andhra Pradesh has been signed;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(g) by when the export would commence from Vijayawada Agri Export Zone?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) Agri Export Zone (AEZ) has been approved for mango in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh involving an estimated expenditure of Rs. 17.90 crores comprising Central Government assistance of Rs. 3.77 crores. State Government contribution of Rs. 4.23 crores and expected private sector investment of around Rs. 9.89 crores.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and Government of Andh—ra Pradesh on 27.9.2002.

(f) Does not arise.

(g) Exports are expected to commence from next season.